

ST. MATTHEW LUTHERAN SCHOOL
2024/2025
PARENTS/STUDENTS HANDBOOK

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(Revised August, 2024)

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FOREWORD

Welcome to St. Matthew Lutheran School!

Your child is one of the most precious gifts that our Heavenly Father has given to you, and we are delighted that you have selected to enroll him/her into our school.

Our staff is committed to very important key elements regarding your child and his/her future. The staff of St. Matthew Lutheran School will provide your child with a quality academic education. We will strive to do our best to meet the individual needs of our students. We will provide many different opportunities for extra curricular activities, understanding that all children have different interests. But the distinctive factor that we are most committed to is providing an environment where your child's relationship with Jesus Christ will blossom and grow.

Jesus Christ will be at the center of all that we strive to accomplish at our school. This would include areas of curriculum, discipline, relationships, organized sports, and everything else in between. Jesus Christ is Lord of all!

Our staff is also committed to reinforcing all that you, as the parent, have been teaching at home in regards to your child's knowledge of Jesus. With the help of the Holy Spirit, your child's relationship with Jesus will continue to be nourished throughout each school day.

As we begin this journey, it is helpful to have documented important policies and procedures regarding our school so that everyone has a clear understanding of the expectations and requirements that are placed upon our students.

We wish you God's richest blessings during your school year, and we look forward to working with you!

In Jesus' Love,

Mrs. Sue Palka
Principal

Mission Statement of St. Matthew Lutheran Church

Approved by Congregational Assembly 5/5/24

St. Matthew Lutheran Church exists to make disciples who share Jesus with others.

Mission Statement of St. Matthew Lutheran School

As God directs and enables us, St. Matthew Lutheran School will develop students who grow deeper in their relationship with Jesus through strong academics, discipleship, and sharing His love with others.

Congregational Long-Term Vision Statement

As God directs and enables us, in the next ten years we will help thousands of people grow deeper in relationship with Jesus through reflective study of His Word and become whole-heartedly committed to Him. We will do this through in-depth study of the Bible, vibrant life groups, families growing in God’s Word, and personal daily devotions that feed the soul.

We will increasingly look for ways to share His love in relationships with others: members, our families, community, and strategically chosen places around the world with the result that God will use us to urgently rescue people from a broken life now and hell-bound eternity to a God-shaped life now and forever. We will do this through equipping members for witnessing, offering need-meeting ministries, engaging in strategic missions, and providing external communication.

School Vision Statement

God has impressed upon St. Matthew Lutheran School to help students grow deeper in relationship with Jesus and become whole-heartedly committed to Him. We will utilize education as the primary tool through which students and families grow in God’s Word and become well-equipped to serve God and others in their home, community, and world, both now and in the future.

Congregational Motto

Helping People Grow Closer to and More Like Jesus

St. Matthew Lutheran School Core Values

God has called St. Matthew Lutheran School to:

1. Provide a “Christ-centered Education” of the highest standard.
2. Provide an environment where “Academic Excellence” is provided for all students to help them achieve their fullest potential of their God-given gifts and abilities.
3. Be a school where “Christian Behavior and Discipline” is evident to all who enter the facility or attend its various activities.
4. Acquire “Teachers who are Committed Christians,” living as vibrant missional Christ-followers, and serving as role models both within and outside the classroom.
5. “Partner with Parents” and provide opportunities for them to be involved in the activities of the school and expect them to set an example of Christian living for the children whom God has entrusted to them.
6. Partner with parents by “Providing Educational Events that will equip them to have a greater impact in their child’s spiritual, intellectual, moral, social, and emotional development in the home.
7. “Establish and Maintain” a loving, positive, Christian environment where young people can achieve to the highest level of their abilities to grow in their spiritual relationship with Jesus and learn to be more effective disciples of Christ.

ABSENCES

When your child is absent from school, please contact the school office. For your child's safety, our secretary will contact parents when your child is absent and we have not heard from you. If you know in advance that your child will be absent, we appreciate early notification. Assignments may be given ahead of time for pre-arranged absences. Please refer to the "Homework Policy for Parent-Initiated Absences" for details regarding this procedure.

However, maximum learning occurs when your child is present at school. Effective instructional techniques, such as classroom presentations, discussions, hands-on activities, and collaborative efforts cannot be replicated. Therefore, attendance is important. If a child should be absent for more than fifteen days, a meeting will be held between the parents, administrator and the School Board Ministry Chairperson to discuss the individual situation.

ACCREDITATION

Our church and school are part of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. The LCMS operates the largest Protestant school system in the United States. Currently the LCMS operates 1,200 Early Childhood Centers, 880 elementary schools, for a total of 2080 schools in the United States. These schools educate more than 200,000 students and are taught by almost 18,000 teachers.

Our school is recognized as an accredited school through Michigan Association of Non-public Schools (MANS) as well as the National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA).

Our last site visit took place in January of 2015. During this process, not only were we granted accreditation status, but we have also been recognized as an "Exemplary Lutheran School" by the LCMS Michigan District. The award was based on the following top four strengths that were identified by the Visiting Team:

1. Unity of Church and School Mission, including funding
2. Implementation of literacy program, including Lucy Calkins Writing Process
3. Apologetics in Religion curriculum
4. Technology Implementation across the curriculum

ADMINISTRATION

The Principal, with the advisement of the appropriate ministries and under the authority of the Administrative Pastor, is responsible for the administration and supervision of the educational program, personnel (all teaching and non-teaching staff), and the finances of the school.

ADMISSIONS/ENROLLMENT POLICIES

In keeping with the State of Michigan requirements, children entering Kindergarten must be five years old on or before September 1st. To assist in determining a child's readiness for Kindergarten, all students will be required to complete some type of formal assessment to assist in determining readiness.

Parents whose children are entering any other grade must provide a grade report from their previous school and the most recent report of achievement test results, if available. All school records from the child's previous school are to be released to St. Matthew as well. Acceptance of a child's enrollment is conditional upon receipt and approval of all school records. An age

ADMISSIONS/ENROLLMENT POLICIES (cont.)

appropriate screening tool is also administered to each new student entering into St. Matthew to assist in determining appropriate grade placement.

St. Matthew Lutheran School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in administered programs. However, a preference in admissions is given to members of St. Matthew Lutheran Church.

Every child entering the school from another state must have a physical examination by a physician prior to enrollment. Also, a complete medical examination is required of all students entering Kindergarten. The school provides forms for this purpose. A certified copy of the child's birth certificate must be presented to the school office for those entering Preschool/Kindergarten.

Parents who seek enrollment for their children must complete an application for admission. This form is available from the school office.

After initial enrollment, parents must re-register for each subsequent year. Every spring, currently enrolled families will need to re-enroll their children. Children enrolled in our Three Year Old Preschool program will be given priority to re-enroll into the Four-Year-Old program during the spring.

In cases of disciplinary problems, poor scholastic achievement, or non-payment of financial obligations, the School Board Ministry is empowered with the authority to deny re-enrollment and/or mid-year removal.

St. Matthew Lutheran School is also limited with resources in helping children with learning disabilities. Before enrollment is granted, a child with learning disabilities will be evaluated. The previous learning institution will also be consulted before determining if St. Matthew can meet the educational needs and provide a quality education to this particular student. Sometimes it is in the best interest of the child not to attend St. Matthew due to the limited support that can be provided.

ADMISSION POLICY FOR KINDERGARTEN - 8TH GRADE

The goal of the School Board Ministry is to provide a Christian education to every child when possible. However, when the enrollment capacity prevents this, our admissions policy is as follows:

General order of admission at St. Matthew Lutheran School:

1. *Children of called workers of St. Matthew Lutheran Church.
2. Students currently enrolled in grades K-8.
3. Children of members of St. Matthew Lutheran Church with siblings in grades K-8.
4. Children of members of St. Matthew Lutheran Church.
5. Siblings of community member students currently enrolled in grades K-8.
6. Children of parents/guardians with non church affiliation attending programs at St. Matthew Lutheran Church.
7. Children of parents/guardians with no church affiliation.
8. Children of parents/guardians from other Lutheran congregations.
9. Children of parents/guardians who are members of other church denominations.

ADMISSION POLICY FOR KINDERGARTEN – 8TH GRADE (cont.)

Procedures:

1. Parents will be notified of the specific dates of registration. All registrations need to be completed and turned into the school office by 4:00 p.m. on the last day of registration to be included in this process.
2. If the number of applicants exceeds the number of openings at any point in this process, we will have a St. Matthew elder present while we utilize prayer and a standardized procedure to draw the names of students to fill the number of available openings. The time and date of this drawing will be announced, and families may be in attendance for the drawing.
3. Members must be official members of St. Matthew Lutheran Church by the first day of registration. In order for this to occur, all new members must complete the required new members' courses in the fall or winter.

The intent is that each class size would be limited to 30 students. Exceptions may occur in the event of an additional called worker's child being added into the class so that no currently enrolled student would be excluded.

Enrollment for Walled Lake Public School residents will close at the end of the 1st quarter.

ADMISSION POLICY FOR PRESCHOOL WALLED LAKE CAMPUS

To enroll into our Three Year Old Program:

- a.) All students must be three-years-old by September 1.
- b.) All students must be toilet trained.

To enroll into our Four Year Old Program:

- a.) All students must be four-years-old by September 1.
- b.) The general order of acceptance for students is per the following:
 1. Currently enrolled in Preschool at the Walled Lake Campus
 2. Children of called worker
 3. Member children from St. Matthew's congregation
 4. Siblings of students already enrolled
 5. Children of community members attending St. Matthew part-time agencies/programs, including Sunday School, weekday school, Vacation Bible School, etc.
 6. Children of parents not affiliated with a church denomination
 7. Children from other Lutheran congregations
 8. Children of parents who are members of other church denominations

AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

We encourage and support students attending after-school athletic and other functions. However, any student attending an event/game must have pre-arranged adult supervision.

ARRIVAL

Supervision will be available for arriving students beginning at 8:00 a.m. Students are asked not to arrive before 8:00 a.m., since proper supervision is not available.

All students arriving between 8:00 a.m. – 8:10 a.m. are required to meet in the gym where they will be supervised. Please utilize this opportunity **only** when it is necessary for your family's needs.

Kids Care is available from 6:45 - 8:00 a.m. Please contact the school office for information.

ARRIVAL PROCEDURE

We want to provide a safe environment for all of our students. This begins from the time that a student arrives at our facility and continues until each student leaves our facility at the end of the day.

Parking lot safety affects everyone. To help manage the high volume of morning traffic, we are requesting that parents assist us with the following items:

1. During the morning “drop-off” routine:

- a.) If parents are planning on dropping off students and not entering the building, **please utilize the circular drop-off by the gym doors**. Our parking attendants will be out in the lots directing traffic to ensure the safety of students.
- b.) If you would like to come inside for a short period of time, please park in the “short term lot” which is located in the front of the church. **If parents choose to park in the lot across from the Preschool/Kindergarten doors, please walk students over to the crosswalk area where the parking attendant is stationed and he will help escort you across traffic.**

2. During the day:

- a.) If parents are coming during the middle of the day to pick up a child or drop off something to the school office, please utilize the “Short-term/Daytime Ministry” lots. **Although our main doors are locked, the church entrance is maintained by security cameras. Please buzz and identify yourself and you will be granted admittance.**
- b.) Preschool families should utilize the “Daytime Ministry” lots to pick up their children. Please wait outside the Preschool doors at 11:20 a.m. or 1:20 p.m. or 3:20 p.m. Students will be dismissed through the Preschool/Kindergarten doors.

3. End of the day:

Parents with students in grades K - 8 are asked to park in the back lot, facing South Commerce Road.

Once students are dismissed, the parking lot evacuation will be directed by the teaching staff in an orderly fashion.

ATHLETICS

A Physical Education (P.E.) program for all students is part of the regular school day. Calisthenics, organized play and recreational activities are under the direction of a teacher. No child is excused from P.E. classes, unless there is a physical disability or a reason is given in writing by the child's parent or physician.

The school participates in a regular program of competitive athletics with other schools. Student athletes who are team members may participate as long as they maintain an approved scholastic standing and adhere to disciplinary standards stated in the school's Athletic Handbook. Currently, athletics are offered to students in grades 5-8: Boys' Basketball, Girls' Basketball, Girls' Volleyball, Coed Soccer, Track, Cheerleading, and Coed Softball.

All students are expected to conduct themselves as Christians at all sporting events. Any student failing to comply will be removed from the activity and the parents will be notified. All disputes will be handled according to our "Conflict Resolution Steps" section found in this Handbook.

Please refer to the school's Athletic Handbook for additional information regarding our athletic program.

ATHLETIC POLICY **Athletic Handbook**

Philosophy

The philosophy of St. Matthew Lutheran School states in part, "We strive for each of our students to develop a growing relationship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, through...**attracting, connecting, and transforming** each child through God's Word and the Holy Spirit. It follows that the philosophy of the athletic program should connect with this philosophy. School interscholastic athletics should be an extension of the classroom. All the students of our upper grades need the opportunity to experience educational athletics.

We strive to help students learn to apply Christian principles to their lives. Dealing with success, as well as frustrations and failure, understanding teamwork, and maintaining proper Christian attitudes in sports and in daily life are worthy goals.

We strive to help our students develop technically correct physical skills, physical conditioning, commitment to team concepts, self-discipline, priority setting, the encouragement of others, perseverance, and the earning of the right to play on the team upon meeting the standards set by the coach.

ATHLETIC POLICY **Athletic Handbook (cont.)**

Information and Eligibility Rules

1. Conference: **Western Lutheran Athletic League**

Christ the King, Southgate	St. Matthew, Walled Lake
Concordia, Redford	St. Matthew, Westland
Guardian, Dearborn	St. Michael, Wayne
Northville Christian	St. Paul, Northville
St. John, Waltz	St. Paul, Royal Oak
	St. Paul, Livonia

Athletic contests are also scheduled against other schools. We also enter our teams in soccer, basketball, and volleyball tournaments.

2. Sports (Grade Guidelines):

Co-ed Cross Country (4-8 Fall)	Girls' Cheerleading (5-8 Winter)
Co-ed Soccer (6-8 Fall)	Boys' Basketball (5-8 Winter)
Girls' Volleyball (5-8 Fall)	Co-ed Softball (5-8 Spring)
Girls' Basketball (5-8 Winter)	Co-ed Track (4-8 Spring)

3. Academic Eligibility:

School work comes before sports. In order to remain eligible to participate in interscholastic contest, the student must:

- A. Maintain a "C" average with no "F's" in all letter graded courses, both at mid-quarter and end -of-quarter progress reports.
- B. Have no "minuses" (unsatisfactory grades) in any non-lettered graded courses, both at mid-quarter and end-of-quarter progress reports.
- C. Not receive 6 Notices of Concern per quarter for incomplete assignments.
- D. Not receive any additional Notices of Concern for incomplete assignments beyond 6, or the student will serve an additional academic probation period.

If the above requirements are not met, the student athlete will be placed on academic probation. The academic probation period is defined as follows: "5 consecutive school days during which the student cannot participate in interscholastic contest, and by coach's discretion, may also be ineligible for practices". If eligibility is not regained during the probation period, the student athlete will be removed from the team. The principal, teacher(s), coach, athletic director, parents, and student athlete will confer and make final decisions regarding academic effort and sports participation.

4. Detentions:

Any student receiving a detention will not be allowed to participate in the next scheduled interscholastic contest. This disciplinary restriction will take effect the day after the detention is given.

EXCEPTION: Any student receiving the first detention for excessive tardiness will not be subject to the participation restriction.

ATHLETIC POLICY Athletic Handbook (cont.)

However, any student receiving a second detention for excessive tardiness will also be ineligible to participate in the next scheduled interscholastic contest. This disciplinary restriction will take effect the day after the detention is given.

SUMMARY OF DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Academic Eligibility and Detentions

REASON	DISCIPLINARY ACTION
Excessive Tardiness Detention #1	No sports participation lost
Excessive Tardiness Detention #2	Loss of next sport contest
Disciplinary Detention	Loss of next sport contest
Poor Academics	Loss of sports participation for 5 consecutive school days
Academic Notices of Concern (6 or greater per quarter)	Loss of sports participation for 5 consecutive school days

5. School Absence:

An absence from school for more than a half day (after 11:30 A.M.) means a student athlete cannot participate in any interscholastic contest on that same day.

6. **Sports Permission Form/Waiver**

The **Sports Permission Form/Waiver** must be completed before a student athlete is allowed to practice. Physical exams expire after one year. Therefore, a new physical exam is required each year.

7. The Student Athlete's Responsibilities:

- A. Remain academically eligible.
- B. Don't get a detention.
- C. Follow the coach's and official's instructions without complaint or argument.
- D. Be courteous to fellow athletes, as well as to coaches, athletes, and fans from other schools.
- E. Display good sportsmanship and respect at all times.
Note: Unsportsmanlike conduct resulting in a player ejection from a game or contest means the player is ineligible for the next contest.
- F. Attend all practices and games. Missing practices for **excused** or unexcused reasons means you will play proportionately less in interscholastic contests than the one who attends all practices. Coaches will use their discretion in this area.

General guidelines are as follows:

- One unexcused absence** – you will not start a game or contest.
- Two unexcused absences** – you will not play in the next game or contest.
- Three unexcused absences** – you will be removed from the team for the remainder of the season.

ATHLETIC POLICY

Athletic Handbook (cont.)

- G. Understand that playing time cannot be guaranteed, but the coaches will try their best to get players into contests. **NOTE:** If the student athlete chooses to opt out of a tournament, coaches will respect and understand that decision.
 - H. **Wear your uniform properly. Return** your school-issued uniform within one week following the conclusion of the season.
 - I. Understand that St. Matthew uniforms may only be worn at school-sponsored events.
8. Parent Responsibilities:
- Support your child, school, coach, and team to the best of your God-given abilities. Practice good sportsmanship. Enthusiastically support teams at athletic events without being over-zealous or critical of coaches and officials. Recognize and appreciate outstanding plays by either team. Use neither profane or obscene language, nor verbal assault.
- Parents and other fans that cannot practice good sportsmanship will be directed to leave the facility where the contest is being played.
- Arrange to have your child dropped off no more than 10 minutes before a scheduled practice, and picked up no more than 10 minutes after the practice is scheduled to end. Please also be prompt in picking up your child after games.
- Parents are expected to participate in transportation, working concessions, and other aspects to make the sports program successful.
- Parents are asked to follow the Conflict Resolutions Steps located in this handbook to help resolve issues in a Biblical manner.
- In general, the parent must exemplify everything positive that he/she wants the student athlete to be, if the student athletic program is to be successful.
9. Athletic Awards:
- Student athletes faithfully completing a season will receive an athletic award certificate. The award will indicate the sports in which the student athlete participated during the school year. Student athletes will also receive a pin for each sport successfully completed. No other awards will be given. Team trophies and plaques remain the property of the school. As the trophy case fills, and space becomes unavailable, trophies may be given by the athletic director to past coaches or student athletes.

Guidelines for Coaches

Given: Extra-curricular athletics are sponsored by St. Matthew Lutheran School as part of and as an extension of the school's educational program. Therefore, they are educational-athletics. The coach is the team's teacher, authority, and disciplinarian. The coach balances praise of the student athlete with constructive criticism of the student athlete. The athlete is a student of the game and behaves as one striving to learn the game.

ATHLETIC POLICY **Athletic Handbook (cont.)**

Therefore, all coaches and student athletes accept the following assumptions:

1. The athletic program is a Christian athletic program. Coaches and student athletes strive to perform to God's glory and to the best of their abilities. Coaches know that they are ambassadors for Christ, and as such, conduct themselves in a proper manner when dealing with athletes, parents, and fans. They model good sportsmanship and set a good example for players and spectators. This behavior includes the following attitudes/actions:
 - A. Displaying a continuous love of Christ at all times
 - B. Fostering positive and open communication with parents
 - C. Following officials' instructions without complaint or argument
2. Commitment to the team, discipline, and sportsmanship are integral parts of the program. Respect for the student athlete's abilities should be displayed at all times.
3. **No tryouts will be conducted for any team.** We will try to accommodate all eligible student athletes.

Junior Varsity (JV) games are scheduled to allow young athletes to experience an organized game situation. All eligible JV players will be given playing time.

Coaches of Varsity teams play as many eligible players as possible in a given game or contest. Playing time cannot be guaranteed, but coaches will try to get players into all contests.

NOTE: If the student athlete chooses to opt out of a tournament, the decision will be respected. **Remember – Winning is a goal, but not the ultimate goal.**

4. Coaches should expect players to be faithful in attending practices and games. General guidelines regarding absences are as follows:
 - One unexcused absence** – player does not start the next game or contest.
 - Two unexcused absences** – the player will not play in the next game or contest.
 - Three unexcused absences** – the player will be removed from the team for the remainder of the season.
5. A coach or an appointed adult needs to remain with the student athletes until all have been picked up.
6. We encourage all conflicts to be resolved in avenues that follow the Biblical conflict resolution procedures found in Matthew 18: 15-17. Please refer to the "Conflict Resolution Steps" that are located in this handbook. These steps are listed to assist you in following the Biblical manner in which to handle conflicts that may arise with those affiliated with our sports program.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Absences, although at times extremely necessary, do cause an interruption in the teacher/student instructional process. Excessive absences cause even larger spans of disruption and difficulties regarding comprehension, and students can become overwhelmed trying to "catch up". In addition, the development of good habits, such as attending school daily and being on time for class, is important for a student's future success in high school, college, the workplace, and

beyond. For these reasons, the administration and teaching staff become very concerned when a student misses an excessive number of school days, especially when they occur in succession. As a result, the following steps will be implemented regarding excessive absences:

1. 5 or more absences by the end of the first quarter – a letter will be sent to the parents addressing this concern.
2. 10 or more absences by the end of the second quarter – the principal will make a personal phone call to the parents regarding this matter.
3. 15 or more absences by the end of the third quarter – the principal will arrange a meeting with the parents to discuss possible solutions regarding this concern.
4. Please note that the State of Michigan deems excessive absences to exceed 18+ days, and once that amount has occurred, the St. Matthew School Board Chairperson, along with State agencies, will be notified if necessary.
5. An absence from school for more than half a day (after 11:30 am) means a student cannot participate in any after-school activities.
6. Exceptions to this policy will occur in the event of a positive COVID diagnosis or health/family crisis.

BAND

Students in grades five - eight have the opportunity to participate in our band program. Band is scheduled during the school day, and students leave their classrooms to attend band. Band lessons are provided through our Novi Share Time. However, parents are financially responsible to provide an instrument.

BULLY POLICY

We define “bullying” as repeated and systematic harassment whereby student(s) are being targeted by verbal and/or physical attacks. Bullying goes against God’s Word and will be dealt with according to age-appropriate procedures.

BULLY POLICY - GUIDING STEPS OF ACTION

The Guiding Steps of Action are to be used at the discretion of the staff and administration. Action taken is dependent on the severity of the offense.

Definition: Repeated and systematic harassment whereby student(s) are being targeted by verbal and/or physical attacks.

1st Offense	P/K	Talk to student and develop strategy
	1/2	Talk to student and develop strategy
	3/4	Talk to student and develop strategy
	5 – 8	Verbal intervention
		Paper-based response: Behavior Intervention Worksheet
		As needed: recess detention

2nd Offense	P/K	Repeat 1 st offense steps and contact parents
	1/2	Repeat 1 st offense steps and contact parents
	3 - 8	Repeat 1 st offense steps and contact parents Recess Detention
3rd Offense	P/K	Repeat 1 st & 2 nd offense steps Administration intervention (Speak w/ student; assign Behavior Intervention Worksheet, communication w/ parents)
	1/2	Repeat 1 st & 2 nd offense steps Administration intervention (Speak w/ student; assign Behavior Intervention Worksheet, communication w/ parents)
	3 - 8	Repeat 1 st & 2 nd offense steps Before-school detention Extra-curricular activities impacted Parents contacted
4th Offense	1/2	Repeat 1 st , 2 nd , & 3 rd steps Possible detention
	3 - 8	Repeat 1 st , 2 nd , & 3 rd steps Meet with parents + administration + SBM representative Possible suspension resulting in jeopardizing class trip participation Possible expulsion

CELL PHONES

If a student carries a cell phone, it must be turned off and kept out of sight during the school day. **Cell phones (including Apple watches) are only to be used after school unless otherwise directed by the teaching staff.** Cell phones will be confiscated if a student chooses to use a cell phone inappropriately. Parents will be required to retrieve confiscated cell phones from the school administrator and students may lose the privilege to have a phone at school if this happens frequently.

CHAPEL

Worship is a part of our Christian response to the Lord. Our students have the opportunity to experience two different worship experiences. On alternating Wednesdays, we have a large group worship experience where our students in grades Preschool through Grade Eight worship together. On the alternating Wednesday, we divide our worship services between Preschool - Grade 2 and Grades 3 - 8. This allows for a more age-appropriate worship experience. Parents are always welcome to attend our worship services. On Wednesdays, we will follow the "Standardized Chapel Attire" as explained in our Dress Code policy section of this Handbook.

CHOIR

"Sing to the Lord a new song!" Psalm 96:1

All students in Preschool through Grade 8 have the opportunity to participate in our Day School choirs. Choirs will be divided according to age level. All students will have several opportunities throughout the year to use their voices to enhance the worship services. The school newsletter will contain information as to when students are singing. All students are encouraged to participate in these opportunities.

In addition, students in grades 5 - 8 will have the opportunity to participate in a performing choir. Details will be announced throughout the year.

CLASSROOM PARTIES

Room mothers organize two parties for each grade level during the year. Room mothers seek input from the classroom teacher and plan activities that are age-appropriate for each grade level.

COMPLAINTS OR PROBLEMS

We encourage all problems and complaints to be handled in the manner that Christ commands in Matthew Chapter 18. We encourage each person to handle and resolve issues in a manner which would be pleasing to Christ. This includes keeping matters private and between those parties who are directly involved, and not voicing these issues with others or utilizing social media. We will not ignore issues, but proper guidance will be given in how to deal with any issues or complaints. (See "Conflict Resolution Steps" for proper procedures.)

COMPUTERS

We provide guided instruction for students in grades K - 8 in our computer lab. In addition to our portable laptop and iPad cart, each classroom is also equipped with computers and iPads. Beginning in the sixth grade, our upper grade students will participate in a "One to One" device program, where each student will have his/her own personal Chromebook.

All students and their parents will be required to complete an "Acceptable Use Policy". This policy states acceptable behaviors and practices in regards to using the school devices and the Internet. If a student intentionally defies these rules, termination of computer privileges can result. If a student intentionally damages a computer or materials in the computer lab, the student will be held accountable for paying to correct the damage.

CONFIRMATION

For information regarding our Confirmation ministry, please contact the HOME office at 248-624-7676, ext. 127 or 129 and speak with our Minister of Youth, Mr. John Welte.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION STEPS

The staff of St. Matthew Lutheran School is committed to enhancing our communication skills throughout our entire school family. As a guideline for handling conflicts in a productive and Biblical manner, we have established these steps according to the principles found in Matthew 18: 15-17.

	1st contact	2nd Contact	3rd Contact	4th Contact
Individual Classroom Concerns Procedures Academic Expectations	Classroom Teacher	Set up appointment with Principal	Teacher/Principal/ Parent meeting	School Board Ministry
School-wide Policies Activities Academic Policies	Principal	School Board Ministry		

Matters regarding safety				
Sports	Coach	Athletic Director	Principal	School Board Ministry
Concerns				
Policies				
Procedures				
Music	Music Dir.	Principal	School Board Ministry	
Ministry				
Operettas				
Christmas programs				
Lunchroom Procedure	Cooks	Principal	School Board Ministry	
Policies/Menu concerns				
Personal Spiritual				
Matters	Pastor	Administrative Board		

In extreme situations when the conflict resolution process has been exhausted and Godly resolutions cannot be met, the School Board Ministry has the authority to terminate a family's registration into St. Matthew Lutheran School.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK

A Crisis Management Handbook has been constructed for all St. Matthew personnel and students. Copies are available in the school office for interested parents.

CURRICULUM

St. Matthew Lutheran School has completed the National Lutheran Schools Accreditation process and is recognized as an Accredited and Exemplary Lutheran School. In preparing for this accomplishment, all areas of curriculum have been documented by grade level and are on file in the school office. Every year, the staff will review and update one area of curriculum. The sequence of reviews will be based on a rotation system in attempts to keep all areas of curriculum current. Jesus Christ will remain at the center of all areas of curriculum.

DAMAGE TO SCHOOL PROPERTY

Our students are held accountable for their actions. Any damage done to school property will need to be rectified. Students and parents are requested to fill out inventory sheets at the beginning of the school year regarding textbooks. Students will be fined for any excessive damage that their books receive during the school year. The following guidelines will be used to help assess the cost for damaged textbooks:

1. Damage due to student writing in the book - 25% of the cost of the book.
2. Damage to the cover or binding - 50% of the cost of the book.
3. Damage to more than 50% of the book - Cost of the entire book.
4. Lost book - Cost of the entire book.

DETENTION

Detentions will be issued to students as a before school punishment for misbehaviors and/or actions that warrant this procedure. Parents will be notified 24 hours in advance so that transportation arrangements can be made. Detention will be held from 7:30 - 8:10 a.m. on Wednesday mornings. Upon arrival, students will be requested to sign in. Those late to detention will be required to serve another one the following week.

DISCIPLINE CODE OF CONDUCT

Students of St. Matthew Lutheran School are expected to behave respectfully to fellow students, teachers, and adults. Their behavior should positively reflect their Savior and school. As we are entrusted to mentor and nurture young disciples, behavior that is ungodly or goes against Biblical principles must be addressed and corrected.

At St. Matthew, we believe in a loving but firm environment. Every student is a precious child of God, yet we all are sinful and at times makes mistakes. Since the student body of St. Matthew is composed of a wide range of ages (3 through 13 years old), different forms of loving correction are implemented for the various ages. Teachers establish age appropriate discipline procedures for the classroom environment and, when necessary, the principal is involved in disciplinary steps. If a child is sent to the office as a result of his/her behavior, parents will be contacted.

If a student should demonstrate inappropriate behavior on a consistent basis, meetings between the teacher, parents, and administration will be set up to collaboratively resolve the issue.

1. The student understands the reason his/her action was wrong and assumes responsibility for the inappropriate behavior.
2. The student understands the consequences for his/her action.
3. The student understands that forgiveness is offered for his/her action.

Overall, our school policy prohibits bullying, physical fighting, cheating, lying, destruction of property, profanity, vulgarity, and the use of tobacco, alcohol, or non-prescribed drugs. In addition, students may not use the internet and/or any type of social networking avenues (FaceBook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, etc.) to post threats or defame the characters of other students and/or staff members. All of these offenses are subject to suspension and/or expulsion at the discretion of the principal and/or School Board Ministry.

DISMISSAL PROCEDURE

Since our school elected to lengthen our school days to 3:30 p.m., we are ineligible to receive bus transportation at the end of the day from Walled Lake public schools. Therefore, we are faced with the challenge of dismissing students in a manner that is safe, time-efficient, and non-stressful. Listed below is our dismissal procedure:

1. Pre-school will dismiss at 11:20, 1:20 and 3:20 p.m. Please come inside and pick your child up from the classroom.
2. Parents who have only a Kindergarten student are encouraged to park in the lot directly across from the Preschool/Kindergarten doors so as to avoid the Grades K - 8 dismissal procedure. If you have additional students in other grades, please park in the back lot with the rest of the school parents.

3. Parents with children in Grades K - 8 are asked to park in the back lot. Please park your car so that you are facing west (looking directly at South Commerce Road).
4. At 3:30 p.m., all traffic will be stopped and teachers will escort the students from the building to the back parking lot. Parents are asked to wait for their students in the parking lot.

For the safety of all children, no parent can leave the parking lot until the teachers in charge indicate that it is appropriate to do so.

5. A teacher will blow a whistle, indicating that the dismissal procedure will begin. Teachers will direct traffic in an orderly fashion to exit the parking lot. Those families needing to turn right are encouraged to utilize the North exit. Those families needing to turn left are encouraged to utilize the main entrance/exit.
6. A teacher will form a late line for those parents who arrive after the dismissal procedure has begun or for students who did not exit the building on time.

Students who are not picked up by 3:45 p.m. will be taken to our after-school Latchkey program. Parents will be assessed according to the Kids Care rates. When possible, we request that you phone the school office if you will be late. This gives reassurance to your child and us that you are safe.

DRESS CODE - PERSONAL APPEARANCE **(For students in Grades 1 - 8)**

We believe in a dress code, and we sincerely try to institute standards of dress and appearance that are fair and will reflect favorably on our school, our students and our Christian homes. We also want to teach children how to make choices in responsible dress. The latest fashions may not always fit the dress code, however the school dress code is designed with guidelines that encourage Christian modesty.

The Administration/School Board Ministry reserves the right to revise the dress code when they feel it is necessary. We ask every parent to enforce our standards. We will also try our best to enforce these standards in a manner that is fair and consistent.

1. All clothing must be neat in appearance with no rips, frays, or tears.
2. Sloppy style clothing is not allowed.
 - Pants must be secure at the student's waistline.
 - Shirts intended to be tucked in must be tucked in.
3. Tight or form fitting shirts, dresses, pants (with the exception of leggings that are addressed below) are not allowed. Dresses must also meet the standard measure of length of finger tips resting on leg when standing upright.
4. For safety and health reasons, shoes and socks are to be worn at all times. Shoes are to be securely fastened.
 - Students may not wear shoes or sandals without backs.
5. Non-Blue Denim, skirts, jumpers, rompers and dresses are permitted on non-chapel days.
6. Blue Denim, skirts, jumpers, rompers and dresses are permitted on Fridays.

7. Leggings are allowed in grades 1-4 and in grades 5-8 when worn with longer tops that extend past the backside.
8. Joggers/athletic pants are allowed.
 - Must be worn with longer tops that extend past the backside when form fitted.
9. Shorts may be worn throughout the school year (note students go outside during the day, even in winter).
 - The length of the shorts should be the length of the student's fingertips resting on his/her leg when standing up straight.
 - Shorts and pants that have writing on the seat are not allowed.
10. Solid/plain T-shirts are allowed; T-shirts with words are allowed as long as they do not promote evil, satanic, violence, alcohol, drugs, smoking/vaping, and offensive words.
11. Students may wear sleeveless tops (no muscle tops, large arm holes, etc.) if the shoulder straps are two or more inches wide.
12. Torsos should be covered at all times.
13. No hats are to be worn in the building.
14. Clothing generally worn outdoors (jackets, coats, etc.) is not to be worn in the building during the school day.

Out of reverence to God, on our scheduled day of worship (typically Wednesday), our SBM has established a "Standardized Chapel Dress Attire" policy.

LISTED BELOW IS THE STANDARDIZED CHAPEL ATTIRE FOR GRADES 1 - 8.

- A. *Solid black, gray, navy blue, khaki dress pants, shorts, skirts, skorts and jumpers/rompers or black, gray, khaki denim pants, shorts, skirts, skorts and jumpers/rompers (Leggings are not allowed unless under a dress or skirt).*
- B. *Solid, striped, and patterned collared shirts and blouses (with or without a collar).*
 - Logos are allowed only if they are smaller than a two-inch diameter, with the exception of the St. Matthew logo.
 - Words are not allowed on clothing on chapel days
- C. *Solid, striped, and patterned sweaters.*
- D. *Solid, striped, and patterned dresses are allowed and do not need a collar.*
 - Dresses must meet the established standards regarding length being at finger tips resting on her leg when standing up straight.
- E. *No sweatshirts, T-shirts, or athletic pants will be permitted.*

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL THE FOLLOWING BE ALLOWED:

Sheer, lacy blouses

Body piercing

Dyed hair of unnatural color, such as blue, purple, dark black, etc. (Natural color highlights are allowed)

All shirts need to have necklines that do not reveal any cleavage.

Shoes with wheels. Please remove all wheels before wearing these types of shoes to school.

BOYS -

No earrings will be allowed during school hours

Hair must be neat and well groomed.

- The length must be above the shirt collar

- Hair cannot cover eyes
- No facial hair, no ponytails, or other extreme hair

GIRLS -

Make-up may be used by 7th and 8th grade students only.

For safety reasons, no aerosol or spray containers are allowed at school.

Hair must be neat and well groomed.

- Hair cannot cover eyes
- No extreme hair

There are designated spirit days and exceptions to these rules authorized by the school administration.

In the event a student does not comply with the dress code standards, the following disciplinary action will occur in addition to parents will be contacted to bring a change of clothes:

First offense - A verbal warning and/or notice of concern will occur a

Second offense - A detention will be issued.

Third offense - Meeting with parents and principal.

TEACHERS - Have a separate dress standard for professional appearance.

EXCHANGE STUDENTS

The parent is to bear the responsibility of the tuition of the outgoing exchange student. Their report card will reflect grades of completion here. Tuition will remain the same with no discounts. The student would return a transcript of credits or verification of academic progress and attendance. The student would be expected to complete the educational requirements to progress to the next grade level. If the student's return is short of 30 days, it is considered an extended vacation and all missed school work will be completed within the days missed.

FIELD TRIPS

Classrooms will make visits to places of interest when educational objectives are better achieved through these means and enhance the regular classroom instruction.

Permission slips and letters of information will be sent home prior to the field trip, detailing all the necessary information so parents know what to expect. Written permission from the parent/guardian is required of all students making such field trips. The students involved will cover all costs of these trips. Only students regularly enrolled in the class may attend the field trip. Please note that all money paid for a field trip is non-refundable. Once tickets are purchased, all sales are final. However, in the event that a particular venue should happen to cancel a field trip and refund money, refunds will be made to everyone who contributed to that particular field trip.

Transportation often presents a problem for field trips. It is necessary for parents to help provide transportation. Parents who are willing and able to provide transportation for such trips are encouraged to do so. **However, we do require all drivers to present a current driver's license, as well as proof of insurance to school office so that an I-CHAT background check can be administered before every field trip.**

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR CLASS TRIPS

When financial assistance is requested, the school strongly encourages students to take ownership of their trip by providing service hours. For extended overnight class trips, family service hours (one hour is equal to \$7) may accumulate up to one half of the total cost of the trip. This is in addition to the already required parent volunteer hours.

FIRE DRILLS/TORNADO DRILLS

Fire drills are held regularly during the school year; tornado drills are held in the spring during tornado season. Three lockdown drills will also be conducted in the school year. Students are instructed during these drills as to the proper procedure for evacuation from the building or movement to a place of safety and the proper directions to follow.

GRADUATION

We celebrate the academic accomplishments of our Eighth Grade and Kindergarten graduates. Separate services are held, usually on the night before the last day of school. The Kindergarten graduation service is usually held at 6:00 p.m., and the Eighth Grade graduation service is usually held at 7:00 p.m.

GUM, CANDY POP

No gum, candy, or pop is allowed during the school day or with lunch unless given teacher permission.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

We strive to provide an environment where your child's health and safety are top priorities. Of course, this will require cooperation from not only the school, but the parents and students as well.

We will meet the physical health concerns and needs of every individual child, but it is critical that parents make us aware of these health needs. We have various health forms in our office to document the special health concerns of our students. Before the first day of school, we encourage all parents to complete these forms and return them to the school office. Every employee of our school will be instructed about the health needs of each individual student. Our school nurse will go through the proper procedures of how to handle each situation, whether it is a bee sting allergy, an asthma attack, or heart condition, etc. Please make sure to update any changes regarding your child's physical condition throughout the year as well.

To minimize the danger of spreading diseases, a student having the symptoms of a contagious infection should be kept at home. Should signs of an illness arise while a child is at school, the teacher or school office will contact the parent or guardian who will arrange for transportation home. We are required to report all communicable diseases to the Oakland County Health Department, so we appreciate your transparency in sharing this information with us.

For your child's safety and protection, our school doors are locked from 8:20 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. Our main entrance is also locked, however, parents will be buzzed in once they are identified. All parents are required to sign in and sign out at the Welcome Desk and wear a dated visitor badge.

There are also numerous surveillance cameras throughout the internal and external areas of our campus. Only those authorized by our Safety Team may review video footage. Tampering with monitors may result in discipline and restitution for damages.

Our school also participates in state mandated safety drills. Our students are properly prepared in procedures requiring the evacuation of the building or locking down the building in the event that a crisis situation should occur during the school day.

HOMEWORK

The design of St. Matthew's curriculum requires that some schoolwork will need to be completed at home by the student. These expectations progress as the age of the child progresses. Beginning at the first grade level, all students will normally have math and memory verses to learn throughout the week. As a guide, each grade level can expect approximately the grade level times ten minutes per night (i.e. 4th grade could have up to 40 minutes of homework per night). This will vary depending on your child's study habits and/or God-given abilities. There are different expectations for upper and lower grades related to homework, as there are some differences regarding "Notices of Concern". Our "Upper Grade Expectations" form begins at grade 3 and requires both student and parent signatures annually.

When children do not utilize classroom time properly, work that was not intended to be homework may need to go home in order to be completed. If your child consistently has an excessive amount of homework, please contact your child's teacher to determine the various factors that could contribute to this issue.

In the event of illness - parents may pick up homework assignments at the end of the school day.

Please refer to the Homework Policy for specifics, which pertains to students in grades 3 – 8.

UPPER GRADE EXPECTATIONS

St. Matthew Lutheran School offers a Christian education and strives to develop responsible, motivated students, who in turn strive to live out their lives to the glory of God. This response to God's many blessings includes giving Him our very best. The following expectations are designed to help students learn God-pleasing behaviors that will guide them in giving Him their very best academic endeavors, now, and in the future high school and college years.

BOOKS

1. All textbooks must be covered. PLEASE DO NOT use the laminated type of cover that sticks to the book. Please do not place tape on any part of the book. Also, no fabric "book socks" (book covers) since they are known to damage textbook covers. We suggest that you use brown paper bags. Teachers will demonstrate to students how to use this method.

- Parents and students should look over books carefully at the beginning of the school year and note major damage on the form that will be sent home. Students are accountable for each of their textbooks, and fines will be given to students who damage their books. Before damages are assessed, forms will be checked to see if the damage was already preexisting.

Damage due to Student writing in book	25% of cost of book
Damage to cover or binding	50 % of cost of book
Damage to more than 50% of book	Cost of entire book
Lost book	Cost of entire book

HOMEWORK

- All homework is due at 8:20 a.m.
- Homework must be handed in on loose-leaf paper, or paper that is perforated in order to be removed from the notebook. We encourage spiral notebooks to be used for note taking, but if paper needs to be used from a notebook, the frayed edges must be cut off.
- All daily work will be done in pencil. Pens will be used at the teacher's discretion.
- The following headings must appear in the upper right hand corner of each assignment, above the lines.

Student Name
Alphabetical Number
Due Date
Subject

Page Number or Assignment Number

Improperly labeled assignments will be subject to a 5% deduction from the final grade.

- Homework that is handed in when due will be graded accordingly for full credit.
- Students who have excused absences will be given one day for each day absent to complete homework (i.e. - two days ill - two days for makeup work).

STUDENTS IN GRADES 5 - 8:

If a daily assignment is not turned in when due, as the teacher recognizes that homework is missing that day, he/she will give a "Notice of Concern". This "Notice of Concern" needs to be signed by a parent and returned to school the next day, along with the missing assignment. The assignment will be marked down 10% as a penalty for being late.

If the signed "Notice of Concern" and missing assignment do not return the following day, the student will receive a "0" for that particular assignment.

If both the signed "Notice of Concern" and the homework are not returned, the student will be sent to the office and the student will make a telephone contact to his/her parent notifying the parent of the missing assignment and informing the parent that he/she will be missing recess to complete the assignment.

After every five "Notices of Concern", a student will be required to serve a detention when the sixth "Notice of Concern" is issued. Detentions will need to be served on Wednesday mornings from 7:30 - 8:10 a.m.

After the first six "Notices of Concern" for each quarter, the penalty for each late assignment will increase to a 50% reduction rather than a 10% reduction in attempts to stop this behavior and increase a student's sense of responsibility.

To reiterate the above in simpler terms:

Day 1 – Assignment is due. All completed assignments receive full credit. Students who do not have their assignment completed will be given a “Notice of Concern” that needs a parental signature.

Day 2 – If the student was given a “Notice of Concern” for a missing assignment the previous day and the student turns in the assignment, the student will receive one letter grade lower when the assignment is corrected. If the student was given a “Notice of Concern” the previous day and the “Notice of Concern” and the assignment are not completed, the teacher will give the student a zero for that particular assignment.

Day 3 – If the student was issued a “Notice of Concern” and the student brought it back with the proper signature and the completed missing assignment, the student has completed his/her responsibilities, but the student will receive a 0 for credit concerning that particular assignment.

If the student was issued a “Notice of Concern” and it was not returned with proper signature, the student would be required to go to the school office and make a telephone contact to a parent informing the parent that he/she will be missing recess to complete the missing assignment.

Parents of 3rd and 4th graders...Please note the modifications listed below:

Parents of students in 3rd and 4th grade will be contacted in the same timely fashion regarding missing assignments, but the students in these grades will only be marked down one grade for every day that the assignment is late. After five days, the student will receive a zero.

MODIFICATIONS

Modifications of these expectations will be at the teacher’s discretion concerning students with special learning needs. These modifications will be fully communicated to the students and parents affected by any changes.

CONTINUED NEGLECT OF HOMEWORK

Conferences between the parents, teachers, principal, and student will be scheduled if a student continues to neglect her/his responsibility to complete homework on time. This group will discuss and implement possible strategies that will attempt to correct the problem. Should a student continue to defy responsibilities, a possible out-of-school suspension could result.

CHEATING POLICY (Students in Grades 6 – 8)

Students who choose to engage in any manner of cheating, whether supplying answers or receiving materials from another, will incur the following consequences:

- 1st Offense Assignment in Question Receives Zero and Parent Notification
- 2nd Offense Assignment in Question Receives Zero and Parent Notification and Detention
- 3rd Offense Assignment in Question Receives Zero and Parent Meeting and Five
Consecutive Days of Detention
- 4th Offense Assignment in Question Receives Zero and Student/Parent/School Board Meeting

PASSING BETWEEN CLASSES TARDY POLICY (Students in Grades 6 – 8)

Students in grades six, seven, and eight are scheduled passing time between classes throughout the day. Time is given to travel across the building, retrieve materials, and use restrooms in a reasonable amount of time. Seeking personal independence, reduction in interruption to classes, and preparation for future education, those students who arrive late to class will incur a “passing tardy”. The accumulation of six (6) passing tardies will result in one lunch period at the Quiet Table in the cafeteria.

Students will be reminded about the policy in the first week of school. Recording of passing tardies will be maintained by the Upper Grade teaching staff. Students will be informed immediately upon reaching their sixth. Quiet Table assignment will take place as close to the date of the sixth passing tardy as possible.

GRADING SCALE

The grading scale that is implemented at St. Matthew Lutheran School is as follows:

94%-100% = A	73%- 77% = C
90%- 93% = A-	70%- 72% = C-
88%- 89% = B+	68%- 69% = D+
83%- 87% = B	63%- 67% = D
80%- 82% = B-	60%- 62% = D-
78%- 79% = C+	

MISSING OR UNCHARGED CHROMEBOOK CONSEQUENCES

As Chromebooks are an essential device for accessing curriculum and learning activities, each student is to have in their own charged Chromebook in their possession daily. Consequences for the lack therein are as follows:

1. Three days of grace per quarter (Kept on a Log by the Upper Grade Staff)
2. Each day thereafter results in a Notice of Concern that is party of "After five notices of Concern, a student will be required to serve a detention when the sixth Notice is issued." The Notice of Concern indicates that the assignment of preparation for class is not met - with the intention to develop accountability in being prepared for class.

CLASS PERIODS

1. Students must be in their seats at the start of each class period.
2. Students are expected to bring all necessary materials for each class into the classroom before the class period has begun.
3. No book bags, nuisance items, food, jackets, or hats may be brought into the classroom unless directed by the teacher.

HOMEWORK POLICY FOR PARENT-INITIATED ABSENCES

The School Board reviewed the issue of Pre-arranged Homework Forms, and determined as of the 2024/2025 school year these forms will no longer be issued. Thus, students will not receive planned homework prior to their absence.

Emergency situations, such as a death in the family, will be dealt with on an individual basis at the discretion of the teachers involved.

HONOR ROLL

Since the main task of children in school is academic, the students in grades 5 - 8 will receive academic recognition according to the following criteria:

Principal's Honor Roll (all A's, 4.0 GPA)

Honor Roll (3.5 GPA and have no more than one "C" on their report card)

Merit Roll (3.0 GPA and have no more than one "C" on their report card)

In order to achieve one of the above academic recognition levels, a student must meet the required GPA in all academic subjects (all subjects with a letter grade). The student must receive a grade of a check (✓) or higher in subjects such as music, art and physical education. A check-minus (✓-) or a minus in any subject will disqualify a student from academic recognition.

Students in grades 1 through 4 will be recognized for their perfect spelling accomplishment.

HOT LUNCH PROGRAM

We have two cooks who prepare nutritious hot lunches on our premises on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays only. Lunch is prepaid through the parent/guardian FACTS account. Menus are published monthly in the school newsletter and on the school website.

For the safety of the children, there are certain rules of the lunchroom. The cooks will explain these rules to the students at the beginning of the school year.

Proper arrangements will be made for students that have specific food allergies. All necessary forms indicating and documenting this special need are located in the school office and need to be completed before the first day of school.

INTERRUPTIONS

When a classroom is interrupted, it also disrupts the learning that is taking place. It is also difficult to regain the momentum of the lesson that was taking place previous to the interruption. That is why we discourage parents from interrupting a class. Parents are encouraged to bring any items, such as a forgotten textbook or lunch, to the school office. We will make sure that the student receives this item at an appropriate time.

If parents wish to speak with a teacher regarding an issue, please schedule an appointment. Parents may set up an appointment directly with the teacher or call the school office, and the teacher will return the phone call at an appropriate time. It is inappropriate to attempt to discuss an issue during the morning when the teacher is attempting to start the academic learning in his/her classroom. We also encourage parents to refrain from discussing issues with teachers during Sunday morning worship services. All teachers are willing to meet with parents at appropriate times.

KIDS' CARE

Before-school Kids' Care services will be offered from 6:45 - 8:00 a.m. in **Room 108**. After-school Kids' Care services will be held in the **Room 305** from 3:30 - 6:00 p.m. Listed below are the terms of the agreement for this program:

1. Those who are enrolled as full-time will be accepted every day. Those selecting to utilize the Kids' Care program on a part-time basis must call ahead to see if there is room for that particular day. Phone calls must be made to the school office by 4:00 p.m. of the previous day to see if there is a vacancy. No drop-ins will be allowed.
2. To ensure space for all full-time students, payment for the days reserved is expected regardless of attendance. There will be no credit issued for days absent.
3. Payment will be \$5.00 per hour for the first child in each family. Payment for each additional child will be \$3.00 per child per hour. For the additional half hour from 5:30 - 6:00 p.m., the additional cost is \$2.50 and \$1.50 for each additional child.
4. The Kids' Care calendar will follow the calendar of St. Matthew Lutheran School.
5. A breakfast snack will be provided by the staff supervisor each morning. An afternoon snack will also be provided.
6. Before-school Kids' Care students will be released to their classroom at 8:00 a.m. After-school Kids' Care students will be dismissed at 3:30 p.m. to the **Room 305** where their supervisor will be waiting for them.
7. Bills will be issued weekly.
8. Kids' Care bills are expected to be paid every Friday. A \$10.00 late fee will be added to the account if payment is not made on time. Special arrangements may be made through the School Board Ministry Financial Monitor for emergency situations.
9. Students may be declined based on the delinquency of payment.

LEAVING SCHOOL GROUNDS

Students **are not permitted** to leave school grounds during school hours, unless they are signed out in the school office by a parent or authorized adult.

LIBRARY

We have volunteers who assist our students and staff in our school library. Students will have scheduled periods of time when they can visit the library and check out materials or use the computer lab. Books that are checked out must be returned by the indicated date posted in the book. Students are not allowed to borrow additional materials until late books are returned. If a book is lost, we will discuss ways of replacing the missing item with the parent.

LOST AND FOUND

"Lost and Found" items will be placed in the "lost and found" bin located in the gym hallway. Students who are missing an item are encouraged to look in this area. Students are advised to mark their names in popular items, such as Little League jackets, St. Matthew sweatshirts, lunch boxes, etc., for easier identification. Valuable items will be kept in the school office. Please contact the school office if a valuable item has been misplaced.

MEDICATION

If a student is required to take any medications, pills, lozenges, etc., during school hours, parents must provide an authorized **Medication Form, which is to be signed by both the parents and doctor**. This form, available from the school office, will be kept on file. Please note that a doctor's medical authorization is needed also for any items that can be purchased "over the counter". These requirements are necessary for the best interests and safety of our students.

NUISANCE ITEMS

Comic books, magazines, stuffed animals, toys, squirt guns, iPods, hand-held electronic games, etc., and the like are not to be brought to school. They usually become a distraction and a nuisance. Such items will be confiscated and must be picked up by the student's parents.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:

To involve all the parents and adult members of the families of St. Matthew in the support and enrichment of the school's educational and extracurricular activities.

PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS:

Each family is required to donate 20 hours of volunteer assistance per year in one or more of the school's educational or extracurricular activities (single parents are required to donate 10 hours per year).

Volunteer hours for each school year will be accumulated from July 1 - June 30. Family members must be non-students and 18 years old or older to participate. The family may choose to fulfill all or part of their requirements by paying \$10.00 per hour payable to the PTL.

Families not fulfilling their program requirement will be assessed at the rate of \$10.00 for each hour not completed. Registration for the following school year will not be accepted and final report cards will not be issued until all program requirements are fulfilled.

PROGRAM GUIDELINES:

The following guidelines apply to all activities for which family involvement hours will be credited:

1. Hours may be earned only by a family member. Hours cannot be transferred.
2. Time spent in any activity for which pay is received does not qualify.
3. Hours are credited on a one-to-one (1 hour donated = 1 credited). All hours must be recorded and credited by the activity coordinator.
4. Donations of merchandise or materials do not qualify as hours.
5. Hours are credited only in the year they are earned. Hours cannot be banked for the following year.

BOOKKEEPING:

The school will appoint a chairperson who will maintain records of each family's accumulated hours and will present the records to the school administration.

EXCEPTIONS:

The Principal of St. Matthew Lutheran School has the ability to “exempt” any family for partial or full volunteer hours at his/her discretion for reasons such as, but not limited to, family illness, family hardship, single parent household, etc.

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES:

Activities which benefit St. Matthew Lutheran School qualify for program participation, including, but not limited to the following:

- Unpaid coaching
- Building maintenance
- Progressive Dinner
- Athletic events assistance
- Classroom assistance (in and out of the classroom)
- Classroom Events/Parties
- “All School” Event/Program assistance
- Welcome Desk Volunteer
- Library assistance
- Computer Room assistance
- Class Field Trips
- Assist in clipping Rebate program coupons
- School Office assistance

One parent involvement hour will be awarded for attendance at PTL or school meetings.

Volunteering for church events, programs, etc. cannot be applied toward your 20 volunteer hours required for the school.

Parents who volunteer in the following roles will be credited as follows:

<u>Hours Earned</u>		<u>Hours Earned</u>	
Sport Coach	20	SBM Board Member	20
Assistant Sport Coach	20	PTL Board Member	20
DI Coach	20	Scrip Coordinator	20
Room Mom	20	Yearbook Coordinator	20
Room Mom Helper	10	CEF Stamp Representative	20

All other volunteers must record their hours in the Volunteer Hours Record Book located outside their child’s classroom.

PARENT-TEACHER LEAGUE

We encourage parents to become involved with our school. Our Parent-Teacher League (PTL) provides abundant opportunities for parental involvement. Our PTL is committed to enriching opportunities to students, as well as providing educational opportunities to parents. Parents will be notified in the school newsletter of PTL meetings and PTL-sponsored events throughout the school year. We look forward to parental participation and support in these functions.

PETS

Unless special arrangements have been made in advance, pets should not be brought to school. Be aware that some students are allergic to certain animals and cannot tolerate contact with them. Please contact your child’s teacher if you have any question.

PICKING UP STUDENTS AFTER EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

It is important that parents be aware of finishing times for extra-curricular activities and approximate ending times for games, so they can pick up children on time. We expect parents to pick up their children on time so as not to require that a coach or teacher remain longer than necessary following the practice or event.

PLAYGROUND WITH COLD WEATHER POLICY

Daily outdoor recesses are a valuable factor in promoting healthy classroom conditions, as young people who are expected to concentrate on academic work need time to get fresh air and exercise. All students are expected to participate in recess activities. They should wear appropriate clothing. Hats and gloves are necessary during winter months, and boots will be necessary when playground areas are muddy or snowy. Students need to have indoor footwear on days they wear boots outside for recess. Outdoor recess boots may not be worn in the classrooms.

Our policy is that all students will go outside for recess. We do not have the resources for indoor supervision of students during outdoor recess time. On days when the weather is extremely cold or rainy, recess breaks are held indoors

In order to let parents know when children will be expected to be outdoors, the following guidelines are provided:

1. Students will be outside when the wind-chill factor is above 15 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. When the wind-chill factor is less than 15 degrees Fahrenheit, but greater than zero, the length of outdoor recess will be shortened. The intent of a shortened activity period during marginal weather conditions is to allow students to release some energy. On these days, the playground supervisor will encourage all students to engage in some kind of active play before entering the building.
3. When the wind-chill factor is less than zero degrees Fahrenheit, the children will remain indoors.

A doctor's note is necessary if a child needs to stay in for recess for a specified period of time after an illness.

PRESCHOOL

At St. Matthew, we believe in the benefits of Early Childhood Education, and that is why we provide the opportunity for three year olds and four year olds to learn about Jesus while experiencing developmentally age-appropriate activities. Our program is licensed through the State of Michigan, and we have qualified teachers who love Jesus and young children. If you would like to learn more about our Preschool, a Preschool handbook is available in the school office.

PRIVATE LESSONS/TUTORING

1. No student will be pulled from classes for private lessons or tutoring of any kind during school hours.
2. Students classified as Special Education by the Walled Lake Public Schools may be tutored during normal school hours.
3. Tutors of St. Matthew Lutheran School students can use the facility before or after school.

REPORT CARDS/PARENT CONFERENCES

Mid-term progress reports are sent home for students in grades 3 - 8. All students in grades preschool - eighth grade will receive some type of formal written evaluation at the end of each quarter. Formal conferences are scheduled for all parents at the end of the first quarter. Teacher-requested conferences are scheduled as necessary and also at the end of the third quarter. We encourage parents to immediately schedule a conference with their child's teacher when they have a concern.

SCHOOL BOARD MINISTRY

The responsibility of the School Board Ministry (SBM) is to provide for the efficient management and operation of the school. The School Board Ministry will also assure that the achievement of the school's mission statement is effectively and efficiently carried out. To accomplish the general responsibility, specific responsibilities are listed below:

1. Determine that the school's purpose and mission statement is in harmony with the congregation's purpose and mission statement.
2. Provide an educational program that fulfills the school's purpose and meets State requirements.
3. Develop school policies, in accordance with congregational policies and procedures and according to legal requirements, that will guide and direct the Principal in the daily management and operation of the school.
4. Work with and support the school Principal who is the school's executive administrator and who is responsible for, under the Administrative Pastor, the daily management of all aspects of the school's operation.
5. Be responsible for the financial management of the school and the financial responsibilities of each school family, according to provisions of the congregation.
6. Prepare and present regular school reports and plans for the school's future to the congregation and its leaders, along with appropriate recommendations.
7. Provide for the promotion of the school and help keep its focus related to the congregation's mission.
8. Carry out such other responsibilities as the congregation may assign to the Ministry.

Membership of the SBM will consist of one elected Chairperson, five to eight congregational members with various gifts and talents, and one member who will represent the “community member” families and is not a member of St. Matthew Lutheran Church. Meetings are generally held on the first Monday of the month and are open to anyone. Closed sessions do occur when matters of confidentiality need to be discussed.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

In the event of unplanned closings of school due to weather conditions, we will follow the decision of Walled Lake Public Schools. The announcements are made on Channel 7 and Channel 4 local news, as well as WJR radio. You will also receive a text from our “Remind” communication system and an email from our school’s Constant Contact Communication system.

In the event of hazardous weather developing during the school day, school may be cancelled. Again, we will follow the Walled Lake Public School district’s decision. If this should happen, parents will be contacted by Remind text, Constant Contact email, and phone call.

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In the event that we should need to evacuate our building due to a fire or gas leak, students will be taken to another area of our St. Matthew property entitled the HOME (2030 South Commerce), which is the house located next to the south parking lot. Parents will be instructed to pick children up from that location if the situation should warrant. If a further distance is required, students will be evacuated to Cross Point Church, located at 2000 South Commerce Road.

Emergency Plans for Natural and Man-Made Disasters - In the event of a natural or man-made disaster that requires the center to shelter the children in place, such as blizzards, floods (natural), road closures, dangerous criminal activity outside the center (man-made), or other such instances, we will do everything we can to ensure the safety of your child.

If possible, we will contact you by telephone, text, email, and television. If we cannot reach you, we will attempt to notify one of your emergency contacts. *Please keep us updated with current contact information for you and them.*

We will continue to care for your child as usual and maintain their typical routine to ensure a calm and comforting atmosphere. Your child will be provided with rest, snacks, and meals, even if we must extend the sheltering past our typical childcare hours.

If your child has any special needs, the teacher and/or principal will stay with your child and will be responsible for gathering and administering any special food, medicine, adaptive equipment, or other necessary items. The teacher and/or principal will provide care for your child until you are reunited.

Please follow any directions we provide for reuniting you with your child. We will follow the directives of professionals who are in control of the emergency, such as utility companies or police. If we cannot be in contact with you, please listen to local television or radio reports. Although being separated from your child can be an upsetting situation, please remember that safety is our main priority.

Do not attempt to come to the school if we are in a lockdown situation until it is safe to do so. Once the emergency has been resolved, your child will be released to you following our normal, daily, sign-out routine. Should an emergency contact arrive to pick up your child, the contact

will be expected to provide identification before we will release your child. *Please review this policy with your emergency contacts, prior to any emergency.*

Should a disaster such as a wind storm that knocks out electricity(natural), or a gas leak (man-made), require us to evacuate the campus, we will contact you as noted above.

Our off-site relocation site is the HOME next door, located at 2030 South Commerce Road. We will walk the children over there. Once there we will continue to care for your child and maintain a calm and comforting atmosphere until you can be reunited. This includes any special care that is required, as also outlined above. Again, the safety of everyone is our main priority and once we are all evacuated and accounted for, we will reunite families as outlined above.

SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS

The St. Matthew campus is protected by numerous surveillance cameras throughout the internal and external properties. Only those authorized by our Safety Team may review video footage. Tampering with monitors may result in discipline and restitution for damages.

SCHOOL YEARBOOK

A school yearbook with pictures of the children, faculty and staff is produced each year. Various school activities, including sports and musical events, along with many other special activities are recorded for posterity. Each family at the time of registration is given the opportunity to order a yearbook. If available, additional copies may be purchased at the end of the school year.

STAFF/VOLUNTEER SCREENING POLICY

All employees and unsupervised volunteers will complete the State of Michigan Background check which includes fingerprinting and checks for criminal/child abuse convictions.

A staff member and/or volunteer shall not be present in the center if he or she has been convicted of any of the following:

- a. a listed sexual offender
- b. Child abuse or child neglect
- c. a felony involving harm or threatening to harm an individual

Any unscreened staff will always be supervised by a screened staff member.

TARDY POLICY

Our school day formally begins at 8:20 a.m. Students are expected to have their own personal agendas completed and be in their classrooms by this 8:20 a.m. starting time. Please realize that when a student arrives late and enters the classroom late, it disrupts the entire class. Children also thrive on structure and routine, and it can be upsetting for the student who arrives late to enter the room once the day's routine has begun. As we want to enhance each student's sense of responsibility and organizational skills, we are requesting that parents strive to have their children arrive at school by 8:10 a.m., so that the child will have plenty of time to take care of his/her personal needs and enter the classroom before 8:20 a.m.

Steps for handling excessive tardies for students in Pre-school - 4 are as follows:

1. 5 or more tardies by the end of the first quarter - a letter will be sent home to the parents addressing the concern.
2. 10 or more tardies by the end of the second quarter - the Principal will make a personal phone contact with the parents to address the concern.
3. 15 or more tardies by the end of the third quarter - the Principal will arrange a meeting with the parents to discuss solutions that can be arranged to correct the problem.

Steps for handling excessive tardies for students in grades 5 – 8:

1. After every five tardies, students will be required to serve a detention when the sixth tardy is issued.

TELEPHONE USE

Students should only use the school telephone in an emergency when a teacher has given permission. After-school plans for your child should be arranged in the morning before arriving at school.

It is the responsibility of the students to see that their books, homework, uniforms, lunch, etc., are brought to school. Repeated phoning for forgotten items does not help build self-responsibility.

Please also refer to “Cell Phones” section of this Handbook.

TESTING

Standardized achievement tests are administered each year to determine individual student and school-wide achievement and growth. All students in grades 2 - 8 take part in the IOWA achievement testing during the Spring.

Cognitive ability tests are administered to students in grades 3 and 7 each year at the time achievement tests are given.

Students in grades 7 and 8 will participate in formal MI State assessments.

Students entering into Kindergarten will be required to be tested as part of the entrance procedure.

TRANSPORTATION

Students who live in the Walled Lake Consolidated School District are eligible to receive bus services. Currently, we only receive morning bus transportation from Walled Lake Schools, due to our choice to extend the length of our school day.

Parents should contact the bus transportation office of the Walled Lake Schools for complete information.

We do request that parents please contact the school office when their child will be going home with someone different. Unless we have verbal or written approval, we cannot release the child to anyone not listed on the child's emergency card.

TUITION AND FEES

PAYMENT OF TUITION AND FEES

1. Monthly payments are to be paid to the school office or to our school accountant on the first of each month.
2. A \$20.00 late fee will be added if payment is not made by the 15th of the month.
3. All balances are to be paid in full by June 30th. The school will hold report cards and/or permanent records (this includes teacher recommendations for Honors Classes) for any students with outstanding balances, until the balances are paid in full. (See Financial Responsibility form.)
4. Families experiencing financial difficulties must contact the School Board Ministry (SBM) appointed "Financial Monitor", so that special arrangements can be made.

REFUND OF TUITION AND/OR FEES

1. Families withdrawing after registering will be responsible for Fees and/or Tuition for items/services in which St. Matthew has incurred costs. Requests for refunds must be in writing to the School Board Ministry (SBM) and will be reviewed on an individual basis. These fees include books/supplies, art instruction, computer, and physical education.
2. Registration fees are refundable as follows:
 - If a family withdraws their registration on or before June 15, the enrollment and any other fees paid up front will be refunded.
 - If a family withdraws after June 15, fees will be refunded only in the case of class unavailability. If class space is available, families will be responsible for the enrollment fee, books/supplies, art instruction, computer, and physical education fees.
3. No **fees** will be refunded if a family withdraws on or after the first day of school.
4. If a family withdraws between the time of registration and the first day of school, **tuition** that was paid will be refunded at 100%.
5. If a family withdraws on or after the first day of school **tuition** will be calculated based on nine months and pro-rated for the number of months attended.

VISITING THE CLASSROOM

Parents are invited to visit their children's classroom after making arrangements with the teacher beforehand. Visitors are to check in at the receptionist desk in the main foyer during school hours and follow the practice of the Visitor's Desk. We ask that parents not intrude into the classroom during the day or at dismissal time. Make-up materials for absent students are to be picked up only at the end of the day.

VOLUNTEERS

For any organization to operate effectively, many services must be performed behind the scenes. So it is with a school, and here we rely strongly on the volunteer assistance of parents. Please refer to the “Parent Involvement Program” section of this Handbook for further details regarding volunteer opportunities. The school staff, students and other parents sincerely appreciate your dedicated efforts. Without your help, many activities would be impossible to accomplish. To all who have assisted in the past and will do so in the future, we say **“THANK YOU!”**

WEAPONS POLICY

A student of St. Matthew Lutheran School who brings a weapon to school, with or without the intent to harm, injure and/or intimidate someone, will be expelled for 180 school days from the date of incident. A “weapon” is defined as a knife, gun and/or any other instrument which can cause bodily harm. This policy follows the State of Michigan guidelines for public school.

FINAL WORD

The home and the church share the responsibility of Christian education. The Christian school, as an arm of the church, does not seek to supplant the all-important role of parents, but, rather, to aid, support, reinforce, and extend it. To take full advantage of what the school does, the parents should:

1. Be faithful in church and Bible class attendance, and in partaking of Holy Communion.
2. Use God’s Word regularly in private and family devotions
3. Pray regularly for themselves, their children, the church and its pastors, and the school and its teachers.
4. Set a consistent example of Christian living and Christian purpose.
5. Show a continued interest in the school life of the child.
6. Encourage the child to do his/her schoolwork neatly and correctly to the best of his/her God-given ability.
7. Provide training in helpfulness, courtesy and Christian values.
8. Assure availability of reference and library books and a quiet place to study.
9. Take advantage of the earliest opportunity to speak to their child’s teacher should there be a question or concern.
10. Visit the school whenever possible to gain a firsthand knowledge of what is going on in their child’s school life.
11. Use discretion in discussing school concerns in the presence of children.